

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

Quarterly¹

NEWS-LETTER

Summer 2009 / Volume LXXIV / Number 3

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Publishing in Los Angeles 1942-1948

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Gifts to the Library

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THE PAZIFISCHE PRESSE AND GERMAN EXILE PUBLISHING IN LOS ANGELES 1942-1948

BY VICTORIA DAILEY



Thomas Mann in Pacific Palisades? While Magic Mountain is certainly a popular Los Angeles theme park, could the celebrated German author of *The Magic Mountain* actually have lived in Los Angeles? Most people would say “certainly not.” But it is true. Thomas Mann, Nobel Prize-winning novelist and essayist, lived there for a decade. As with so many things about the City of Angels, facts often defy expectations. And when it comes to Los Angeles, there are always new facts to be discovered. Is it the smog blanket that covers up so many interesting activities? Do the twisting canyons conceal what goes on within them? Do the vast distances between places simply cause a kind of information inertia? Whatever the cause, Los Angeles is a place of mystery, whose past is little known—nor long remembered—even by those who claim to know the city well.

It still surprises people to learn that German culture flowered in Los Angeles, if only for a decade or so, and that leading German cultural figures managed to thrive there. They did so, in part, through the Pazifische Presse, which I discovered through a circuitous route. My first job in the antiquarian bookselling world was as an assistant in Jake Zeitlin’s bookshop, where I worked in the early 1970s. Jake was an old friend of Saul Marks, the fastidious, and one of L.A.’s foremost, letterpress printers—Saul had printed many of Jake’s catalogues and books. Soon I came to know Saul and his wife Lillian, and visited them on several occasions to learn a thing or two about the printer’s craft. What I did not know then was that Saul had been part of the extraordinary endeavor called the Pazifische Presse.

Years passed, and as my interest in Los Angeles’s literary and artistic history deepened, I began to collect books in these fields, among them

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several *Pazifische Presse* titles. They were in German, so I could not really read them, my German being limited to one semester in school. But I sensed that these books were somehow unusual, important and overlooked, and since Saul Marks was involved, and because I knew him, I felt a direct connection to these books. I wanted to know more about how the press came to be, about the publishers, about the writers and what they all had intended. What was a German press doing in Los Angeles in the 1940s?

Just when my curiosity was reaching a peak, I met Roland Jaeger, a German bibliophile and scholar, at the Villa Aurora in Pacific Palisades. (The Villa Aurora is another one of those hidden, special L.A. places, a German-American cultural center in the former home of writer Lion Feuchtwanger). I mentioned my interest in the *Pazifische Presse* to him and discovered that he had been researching the press. We immediately agreed to undertake a project which resulted in the publication of the book *New Weimar on the Pacific*, published in 2000. I now know how the press came into existence and why the writers participated, as well as the bibliographical details of each book, and I am pleased to have brought out this book because, in a sense, I have helped to solve another Los Angeles mystery, and a literary one at that.

The birth of the *Pazifische Presse* can be traced back to an advertisement placed in the October 1942 issue of *Aufbau*, the German-Jewish newspaper published in New York (and which still exists.) Two German émigrés in Los Angeles, Ernst Gottlieb and Felix Guggenheim, informed readers that they had established a private press in order to provide German writers in exile on the West Coast with a forum to publish in their native language. They announced that seven volumes by noted authors would soon appear, and they asked for subscribers. The authors were internationally known, and included Thomas Mann, Franz Werfel, Alfred Döblin, Bruno Frank, Leonhard Frank, Friedrich Torberg and Alfred Neumann. Besides their literary ambition, the publishers also announced their political intention as well, which was, in their words:

To give testimony to the eminent cultural force that was expelled by Hitler and which has found a future in America. In Nazi Germany war reports and propaganda are reported in “pseudo-German,” while here, on the

Pacific Ocean, the majority of exiled German authors use the language of Goethe. We invite you to enrich your libraries with a few literary treasures, which you will still be able to enjoy when Hitler has long since become nothing more than a dark chapter in the book of history.

So the publishers clearly found it important to provide a forum for the best of German culture at a time when it was being devastated from within. And by naming the press *Pazifische*, (that is, Pacific) they intended not only to indicate their location, but also to refer to the peaceful message of their activities. Many of the cultural leaders of the Weimar Republic had settled in Los Angeles, and it is somewhat astonishing to realize who was there in this New Weimar on the Pacific: in addition to the writers already mentioned, there were such literary luminaries as Lion Feuchtwanger and Bertolt Brecht; composers Arnold Schoenberg, Hans Eisler, Erich Korngold, and Ernst Toch; conductors Bruno Walter and Otto Klemperer; stage and film directors Max Reinhardt, Fritz Lang, Otto Preminger, and Billy Wilder; actors Peter Lorre, Ernst Deutsch, and Oskar Homolka; and architects Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler. So a talented and creative group of émigrés landed, of all places, in Los Angeles, basking in the sun while making art.

The two men who founded the press, Ernst Gottlieb and Felix Guggenheim, were both German Jews who had immigrated to the United States when life for Jews in Germany became impossible.

Gottlieb was born in Munich in 1903 and from an early age was interested in music. However, he began a career in business, and fled Germany in 1938, arriving in Los Angeles, where he took up photography. He soon became a busy portrait photographer and counted among his clients many of the well-known émigrés in the area, including Thomas Mann, whose portrait was one of Mann's favorites; Mann wrote of it: "Here is the best picture ever made of me!"

Gottlieb's partner, Felix Guggenheim, was born in 1904, in Constance. He studied law and economics, earning doctorates in both fields, and began work as a journalist in economics for a leading Berlin newspaper, but soon joined a Berlin bank in 1926. Guggenheim came to know a leading Berlin printer and publisher, Seydel, who had also founded the prestigious German book club, the Deutsche

Buch-Gemeinschaft. Around 1930, Guggenheim left banking and took over the directorship of both the publishing house and the book club. In 1938, realizing he had to flee, Guggenheim left for Switzerland with his collection of incunabula. He arrived in the U.S. in 1940, and because he did not like New York, he moved to Los Angeles, where, like countless other new California arrivals, he became involved in the citrus business. He used his profits from oranges and lemons to found the *Pazifische Presse*.

Gottlieb and Guggenheim had both known Thomas Mann in Germany, albeit slightly, but with all three in Los Angeles, it was inevitable that they should meet again. Thomas Mann, the celebrated novelist of such works as *Death in Venice*, *Buddenbrooks* and the aforementioned *Magic Mountain*, was the winner of the 1929 Nobel Prize for literature. Because of his anti-fascist writings, and because his wife was Jewish, he left Germany in 1933, settling in Switzerland. Shortly thereafter, he was denounced by the Nazis, who stripped him of his German citizenship in 1936. He accepted a position as lecturer at Princeton University in 1938, and then moved to Los Angeles in 1941. The house he built in Pacific Palisades soon became a gathering place for the German literary community and his house was featured in the December 1942 issue of *California Arts & Architecture* magazine, the leading forum for contemporary architecture during the 1940s.

Mann was perhaps the most celebrated German novelist in the world, and the *Pazifische Presse* treated him with special care. It was Mann who provided the text for the press's first volume, a novella called *Thamar*, which was actually an excerpt from his forthcoming novel, *Joseph the Provider*. Immediately, the *Pazifische Presse* had the prestige of Mann's name and reputation, and it greatly helped the reputation and growth of the press. *Thamar* appeared in 1942, and became the standard for all future *Pazifische Presse* books. Issued in a special subscriber's edition of 150 copies, signed by the author and bound in half leather, there were also 100 numbered copies of the trade edition bound in half cloth. This would be the typical pattern followed by the press in future editions.

Ultimately, the press published a total of eleven works, three of which were by Mann. After *Thamar*, the press published *Das Gesetz* in 1944 which Mann had written in 1943 as a contribution to an anthology

based on the Ten Commandments; *Das Gesetz* was later translated into English as *Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods Before Me*. Mann's final contribution to the *Pazifische Presse* was *Leiden an Deutschland*, (*Sorrow for Germany*), which appeared in 1946. It is a compilation of Mann's diary entries from 1933-34 chronicling the Nazi seizure of power in Germany and the resulting threat to humanity and culture. Upset with the McCarthy hearings and the political mood of the United States after the war, Mann moved back to Switzerland in 1952, where he died in 1955.

Although Mann was the press's leading author, other notable writers contributed as well. Born in 1884, Lion Feuchtwanger, the master of the historical novel, fled Germany in 1933 after having been labeled by Goebbels as the "worst enemy of the German people." He was also stripped of his citizenship, doctoral degree, and property, and found asylum in Southern France. In 1939-40, he was interned but escaped from the internment camp in France and managed to get to Lisbon. He arrived in the U.S. in 1940 and in Los Angeles in 1941, where he settled, like Thomas Mann, in Pacific Palisades. Feuchtwanger had his large library in his house, the Villa Aurora. A passionate book collector, he had lost his first collection to the Nazis, but in Los Angeles, he assembled another vast book collection.

He wrote several of his important works while living in Pacific Palisades, among them *This is the Hour*, a novel based on the life of Goya, and one based on the American Revolution, *Proud Destiny*. The *Pazifische Presse* published his play about the Salem witch trials, *The Devil in Boston*, (*Wahn oder Der Teufel in Boston*) in 1948.

Because he was so successful as a writer, Feuchtwanger was able to offer financial assistance to other émigrés who were less fortunate than he. When the *Pazifische Presse* published *The Devil in Boston*, it deviated from a normal run of 350 copies and published 1000 copies, knowing that Feuchtwanger's work would be in demand. Ostensibly a play about the Salem witch trials, it was also a clever exposé of the McCarthy hearings, and it predates Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* by five years.

Feuchtwanger was one of only a few of the émigrés who remained in California after the war, living at the Villa Aurora until his death in 1958. His legacy continues, both at the Feuchtwanger Memorial Library at USC, and at his home.

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Bruno Frank was another of the press's distinguished authors. Born in 1887, he left Germany in 1933 and arrived in the United States in 1937, settling in Los Angeles. Known for his novels, he also worked as a scriptwriter in Hollywood and contributed to the screenplay for *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* in 1939. He lived in Beverly Hills, and his home was another gathering place for German-Jewish refugees in Los Angeles. His work on further projects was terminated by his untimely death in 1945. He contributed a novella, *Sixteen Thousand Francs*, to the *Pazifische Presse* in 1943, a tale about a young German who steals the money of a fallen French soldier at the end of World War I. Driven by his conscience, the young thief becomes a supporter of the Weimar Republic, only to become a victim of the Nazis after their seizure of power.

Finally, another important contributor to the press was the dramatist, poet and novelist Franz Werfel, who had emigrated from Vienna in 1938 and arrived in Hollywood in 1940, where he completed his acclaimed novel, *The Song of Bernadette*, in 1941. In 1942 he moved to Beverly Hills with his wife Alma Mahler Werfel and they were soon at the center of the active literary and musical community of Southern California. Werfel agreed to compile a selection of his poems for publication by the *Pazifische Presse* in 1945, but tragically, he died while reading galley proofs. The volume was published the following year with a preface by his widow; it included work dating from 1908.

Apart from its literary merits, the *Pazifische Presse* is also noteworthy for the artfulness of its productions. This was in large part due to the choice of printer: Saul Marks. Saul and his wife Lillian ran the Plantin Press in Los Angeles, one of the most renowned American private presses of its day. Marks, a Jewish immigrant from Poland, was born in 1905 (coincidentally, on the very same day in June as another exceptional Los Angeles printer, Ward Ritchie) and arrived in the United States, in Detroit, in 1921. Married in 1928, he and his bride arrived in Los Angeles in 1930 and founded the Plantin Press a year later. The volumes of the *Pazifische Presse* clearly carry Marks's signature style: they were simply, elegantly and classically printed, and two of the volumes—the poems by Werfel and the play by Feuchtwanger—were selected for awards by the American Institute of Graphic Arts as among the fifty most beautiful books of the year. Unfortunately, the unknown binder chosen by the press was not of the highest caliber,

and many of the leather bindings have deteriorated over the years. The Plantin Press printed all eleven *Pazifische Presse* books.

As early as the spring of 1945, the publishers had foreseen that the *Pazifische Presse* would lose its historical significance with the end of the war. In a letter written in the spring of that year to Mary S. Rosenberg, their book distributor in New York, they mentioned that they were going to sell the rights to their books to major publishers in Sweden, who were then publishing the works of important German authors, and that the press's role would soon be complete. Nevertheless, the press lasted until 1948, when both publishers redirected their professional interests: Gottlieb became an antiquarian bookseller and Guggenheim a full time literary agent.

Gottlieb's long-time interest in music and books led him to become a rare book dealer specializing in music books. He opened a bookshop in Beverly Hills with a partner, Dr. Kurt Schwarz, another émigré who had arrived in Los Angeles in 1947. Gottlieb learned his trade quickly, and was soon commissioned by many American libraries and collectors to acquire historical music books and sheet music. He published about forty catalogues, and among his clients were resident composers like Schoenberg and Stravinsky, as well as various opera singers and composers.

Gottlieb was eventually disappointed by the overall lack of interest in the history of music, and in a letter of June 24, 1950, he complained to his friend Friedrich Torberg about the cultural scene in Los Angeles:

Believe me, the intellectual emigration in Hollywood is nothing but a fairy tale. There is no intellect, there is no interest in intellectual issues. Do you really believe that some so-called intellectuals find their way to my bookshop which is so centrally located and has such a nice atmosphere above the roofs of Beverly Hills? It's the young Americans from Long Beach, Redondo Beach and the small surrounding communities who come up here to browse. There are certain circles around the universities that are interested, and that's it. I've offered everything from Leo Slezak's works to Mozart to the Viennese in Los Angeles—in vain. It is more likely that a Viennese operetta sells to Bristol, England, than to sell Mozart's letters in Hollywood.

Despite these dispirited words, Gottlieb went on to publish a highly regarded series of books, the Facsimile Editions of Rare Books of Music, and he was active in various musicological groups. He relocated his business to Palm Springs, where he died in 1961 at the age of 58. His inventory was taken over by a young colleague, Theodore Front, whose business specializing in music literature still exists.

Felix Guggenheim, who had degrees in both law and business, and who knew a vast amount about publishing, was able to use these skills to become a full-time literary agent. He represented Lion Feuchtwanger, Alfred Neumann, Arnold Zweig, Alfred Döblin and Heinrich Mann, and in 1950, started travelling to Germany on a regular basis to re-establish ties to publishers and printing houses. He also assisted authors, such as Erich Maria Remarque and Vicki Baum, in German-American copyright questions. In Los Angeles, he advised the legendary movie agent Paul Kohner, a Viennese émigré, in legal and financial matters, and he assisted many European authors regarding the movie rights to their works. In 1966 he was awarded the Order of Merit, First Class, by the Federal Republic of Germany for his work in re-establishing German authors in the international book market. Guggenheim was also a well-known collector of incunabula, medieval Judaica and Chinese art. He died in Beverly Hills in 1976.

In a note of gratitude to Felix Guggenheim, Dr. Henry Hausner, a New York subscriber to the *Pazifische Presse*, wrote in 1944: "With its limited editions, the *Pazifische Presse* has accomplished a cultural feat." Defying troubled times, the publishers of the *Pazifische Presse* made a modest yet significant statement for humanity. On the shores of the Pacific Ocean, they provided a forum for exiled German authors in the belief that their voices deserved, in fact needed, to be heard. Their small venture was a direct challenge to the immense, crippling force of Hitler, and they were right to predict in 1942 that bibliophiles would still be able to enjoy their books when Hitler had long since become nothing more than a dark chapter in the book of history. The contribution of Ernst Gottlieb and Felix Guggenheim, both to world literature and to the literary history of Los Angeles, deserves greater recognition. Their struggle for artistic integrity and freedom was an act of courage during a dark time, and in an unlikely place.

REVIEW

BY VICTORIA DAILEY

The Visionary State: A Journey through California's Spiritual Landscape by Erik Davis. Photographs by Michael Rauner. Chronicle Books, 2006. 272 pp., 164 photographs. \$40.

Most of the consequential subjects in California history have received their due—the Gold Rush, the railroads, urban development, agriculture, art and numerous other topics—have all been examined and books written. Yet surprisingly, one subject has been overlooked, a subject that defines California as aptly as the others—her unusual spiritual tradition. Of all the states in the Union, California is most closely associated with dreamers and eccentrics, utopians and cultists. Frank Lloyd Wright, who worked for some of them, mused: “Tip the world over on its side and everything loose will land in Los Angeles.”

The mere mention of California to some outsiders conjures nothing if not “alternative lifestyle.” Edward Abbey remarked: “There is science, logic, reason; there is thought verified by experience. And then there is California.” Certainly California has earned its reputation as a place where old ideas evaporate and new ones germinate and sprout, sometimes taking root. It can confidently claim its counter-cultural traditions, and the evidence of unusual, radical or just plain nutty ideas is all over California—in the various spiritual communities that flourish here and in the often-fanciful architecture that reflects the beliefs of practitioners.

While there have been books on individual religious traditions in California and some of the unusual architecture has appeared in general survey books, surprisingly, no book has explored the development of the state’s untraditional spiritual history. Erik Davis’ recent book, *The Visionary State*, corrects this oversight and does so in an engaging, well-planned, well-written and lusciously illustrated way.

California’s long tradition of freedom and toleration has attracted many spiritual seekers, people no longer satisfied with prevailing religious practices and beliefs. Perhaps California’s splendid natural scenery was the first inspiration for a new way of understanding spirituality. Perhaps it was the climate. Perhaps it was the open attitude of the

state's settlers, immigrants all. Most likely, it was a combination of all three, and whether in the 19th century or today, California has offered a refuge for those whose beliefs stray from the center.

While various Christian-based alternative religious communities developed in the mid-19th century (Mormonism, Christian Science, Transcendentalism), there were those who did not find satisfaction in either the old or the new Christian sects, and many turned eastward, to India and Asia, to Hinduism and Buddhism. These seekers combined elements of Eastern spiritual traditions with Western ideals, and such philosophies as Theosophy and Vedanta were the result of this trend.

By the end of the 19th century, there was a good deal of interest in the world's religions and a major conclave—The World's Parliament of Religions—was held in 1893 during the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. This was the first gathering of representatives from the world's Eastern and Western religious traditions, and its influence was felt in many areas—it was here that Swami Vivekenanda presented Hinduism and yoga to Americans for the first time. He opened his remarks with the words "Sisters and Brothers of America," and was greeted by a several-minute standing ovation from the audience of 7,000. Vivekenanda then went on a lecture tour of the United States, including California, arriving in Los Angeles in late 1899; he stayed for over two months, lecturing and writing, departing in late February 1900 for San Francisco, where he remained for over a month.

While we think of Indian swamis coming to the west as a recent phenomenon (think Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Transcendental Meditation), their history predates the 1960s by decades. Vivekenanda went on to found the Vedanta Society in the United States, and both the Vedanta Temple in the Hollywood hills and the one in San Francisco (at Webster and Filbert) owe their existence to Vivekenanda's little-known pioneering trip to California.

Likewise, the Theosophists presented their beliefs at the 1893 congress through the lectures of Annie Besant. Besant, an early Theosophist, came to San Diego in 1897 to participate in the groundbreaking ceremonies for Katherine Tingley's Theosophical community at Point Loma. By the early 1900s, Lomaland was home to a campus of architecturally distinct buildings, including the first Greek amphitheater in North America and a raja yoga academy.

A quarter-century later, another Hindu swami arrived in California, Paramahansa Yogananda, who founded the Self-Realization Fellowship in Los Angeles on Mount Washington in 1925. Within twenty-five years, six SRF temples were built in Southern California, and today the group has nearly 500 centers in 54 countries, proof of the success of Yogananda's vision that first took root in Los Angeles.

Other spiritual leaders also found California a welcoming place, and by the mid-twentieth century, California was awash with alternative spiritual opportunities—Aimee Semple McPherson's Foursquare Gospel Church, Manly P. Hall's Philosophical Research Society, and numerous others.

Davis surveys all of these developments, writing insightfully and vividly on not only the spiritual communities that found a home in California, but also on some of the exotic architecture that flourished here, including the Babylonian and Mayan-inspired buildings of Los Angeles. Illustrated with Michael Rauner's stunning color photographs, this work also documents the Zen presence in the Bay Area, the Druids in Marin, and Esalen in Big Sur, as well as such esoteric sites as Salvation Mountain in the Mojave Desert and the Unarian headquarters in El Cajon. Some of the groups have made their way into the mainstream, others remain on the fringe, but all found California a haven, a place where new thoughts, new visions, could safely be explored.

The tradition of seeking was established in California from its earliest days, set in place by the Argonauts of 1849. California was, from the outset, a place for dreaming, a place for trying out the new, a place for experimenting. As Erik Davis puts it in his introduction, "We Californians are still routinely mocked for our flakiness, our self-obsession, our fondness for fads and health regimens and strange notions. But the familiar jokes also reflect something much more substantial about the place: its intensely creative and eccentric spiritual and religious culture."



SERENDIPITY

BY ROBERT J. CHANDLER

May with rain. Cats around our feet demanding attention. Even the stock market has taken an undetermined pause. Good reasons to stay inside and write. A Book Club column has been calling, while we have been distracted for months on an ever growing work project for Wells Fargo's Letter Express service in Mexico which follows us home on evenings and weekends. It keeps pace with the "octopus" behind my desk. This is Susan's term for a pile of unshelved books that match our current writing sprees—plus the miscellaneous which we have not decided yet where to shelve.

We are not certain how the QN-L will look in the future. The best minds in the Club meet regularly to determine direction with shrinking assets, and your directors are personally augmenting the incoming cash flow. We are expecting a forty percent reduction in the QN-L budget.

The Board, though, has sequestered funds for our remodeling, safe from the vicissitudes of the stock market. We will transform our space to a thing of beauty and utility. It will no longer be, as the *Chronicle* described floor 5 on April 26, in "a dingy building on Sutter where co-workers squeeze by one another down narrow hallways, asking when a colleague will give up the cramped conference room." Yes, SPUR [San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association] has moved out into luscious new digs, and the Board thanked them for being such generous and hospitable neighbors for so many years.

A week earlier, that same newspaper featured Emeryville bookbinder John DeMerritt, past President of the Hand Bookbinders of California. He learned from Ulli Rotzscher, current president of the group. Annually the Book Club presents an exhibit of the Hand Bookbinders choicest art, and currently, DeMerritt is binding Peter Koch's latest, *The Helen Fragments*, drawn from the *Iliad*.

Up in the Gold Country, a case of skullduggery has occurred not seen since a Wells Fargo agent planted a Pleistocene skull in the 1860s. Ann Whipple, our beloved former Executive Secretary, has left the Bay Area for her old mountain home in Calaveras County. Visit her at 5799 Michel Road, Mountain Ranch, CA 95246. "Tea will be served," she writes, but call ahead: 209-754-1844.

With sadness we record the passing of former Director Dan Volkmann, a gentleman among gentlemen, and an avid bookman. With the care of the architect he was, Volkmann became one of the very few to build a first edition collection of the Zamorano 80, the 1945 list of basic books of California compiled by the famed Los Angeles bibliophilic club.

The sticking book is the rarity of John Rollin Ridge's *The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta, the Celebrated California Bandit* (1854). However, Volkmann's heritage demanded he have it. Ancestor William Daegener bought gold dust for Todd's Express in the Southern Mines while Joaquin robbed, pillaged, and murdered. Befitting the grandson of a partner in August Schilling & Co., books added spice to Dan Volkmann's life. We miss him.

Past Director Paul Birkel, the first Dean of the University Library at the University of San Francisco, and a prolific writer for the QN-L, has also departed to the Golden Hills. Whether through acquisitions or automation, Birkel infused the Gleeson Library with quality. In 1991, the University declared him to be a Doctor of Human Letters and the next year, elected him a Fellow of the USF Gleeson Library Associates.

We remember Paul Birkel as his printed memorial states: He "was courtly, kind and gracious—always generous and giving. His friendly smile and quietly elegant manner were welcoming and calming."

On March 23, the Oscar Lewis Book Arts award went most deservedly to British-born Graham Mackintosh, whose printing prominence grew out of the Berkeley Poetry Renaissance of the 1950s. Poet Jack Spicer profoundly perfected his development and from 1962 to 1968, Macintosh ran the Spicer-infused White Rabbit Press—subject of poet and printer Alastair Johnston's 1985 QN-L article and his Poltroon Press's bibliography.

In 1963, Macintosh printed the first book for East Bay bookseller Robert Hawley's Oyez Press, and in 1997, its authorized checklist. Richard Dillon profiled this press in a 1996 QN-L article. The 1970s found Macintosh in Santa Barbara at John Martin's Black Sparrow Press, which had discovered poet Charles Bukowski in 1965. Although the grateful Mackintosh said little at the ceremony, just a list of the fine presses this publisher, printer, type and book designer, editor, and writer has enhanced for almost fifty years would have enthralled the crowd.

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While we have been to many Oscar Lewis Awards, we were surprised that we were the honoree for the award in History. Taking the opportunity to speechify we did. We work to make our shared past interesting through close analysis of evidence and the interrelations of events and personalities. Letters, ephemera, and photographs amplify information in books. A chronological list of eBay and abebook purchases form a diary of our projects. Current is a Book Club publication on Grafton Tyler Brown, an African American lithographer who worked in San Francisco.

We are singly focused, or “obsessive compulsive,” as another member of the family states, all the while attempting to recall when the last time was we took her to a movie. We moved out of one house and into another due to an expanding library. As if our writing is not enough, we get excited over our friends’ studies. We know smarter people than ourself and nudge them to bring forth the fruits of their labors—printed and between covers. We find history a joy.

As our day job has something to do with stagecoaches, we found this eBay item amusing:

January 19, 1868. Dear [daughter] Lyra; I will write you my experience riding in a Stage from Rome Georgia, to Blue Mountain, Alabama. We had a very dilapidated old creaking Stage coach loaded down as follows-- One man up with the driver, one colored man, two white men, two women, and two babies inside, beside myself.

At each farm house as we came along in the afternoon we found somebody out in the road with a lot of chickens with their legs tied together in bunches of about six, and a basket of eggs, or a pail of butter for sale. The driver bought them all. He paid 25 cents apiece for the chickens, 25 cents per pound for the butter, and 15 cents a dozen for eggs. He piled the chickens on the top of the stage, the baskets of eggs inside, the butter in the boot of the stage, until at last we had about 6 dozen live chickens, five baskets and one box of eggs, several pails of butter, one can of oil, and a long cross cut saw.

The road [through the Appalachian Mountains] was very rough with many streams of water without bridges. As we came along the old Stage creaked, the saw and boxes and pails clattered, the egg baskets tumbled about, the chicks crawled under the railing and hung with their heads

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down all around the top of the stage, and squalled and squawked; others on top to which their legs were tied, flopped their wings and cackled; one of the women was sea sick, their babies cried at the top of their voices, and the colored man wondered "how much furder" we got to go? The sight was ludicrous enough.

We met an old lady on a pony and frightened the pony nearly to death. One of the passengers had to get out and lead the pony off into the woods till we passed. After dusk we arrived at the home of the driver, where it turned out that he kept a Boarding House for a gang of men who were building a Railroad and his purchases were to supply the table. Love to all—PAPA.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BOOKISH NEWS

BY BRUCE WHITEMAN

The second of the two annual Goudy Lectures took place at Scripps College in Claremont on January 24. Two British book artists spoke in turn about their work. Ron King, the well-known artist who founded the Circle Press in 1967, was first, and he gave a synoptic tour of his work of the last forty years. King has used silk-screened collages primarily to illustrate a series of impressive texts over the years, from the Prologue to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* to his recent *Tabernacle*, a remarkable project that comes in a box, as one might expect. The "circle" in Circle Press referred to a group of sympathetic artists who became associated with the press, of whom one of the most recent is Sam Winston. Winston spoke about his work, which mostly focuses on language as a graphic element in bookmaking. Winston once talked the *Oxford English Dictionary* staff into donating a copy of the *O.E.D.* to him so that he could make it into a sculpture. Where King's work is warm, colorful, and quasi-surrealist, Winston's is rather austere and resolutely black and white (as language normally is). The lecture coincided with the opening of an exhibition at the Clark Humanities Museum at Scripps, devoted to the books of the Scripps College Press. "Pushing the Envelope: The Scripps College Press Since 1986" includes some forty-five books, but was, alas, in the cases only for two weeks and closed on February 6.

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

The Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, just outside of Los Angeles County to the northeast, is currently showing one of the four extant copies of the original 1215 issue of Magna Carta as part of an exhibition entitled “Magna Carta: The Essence of Democracy” which closes on June 20. The copy comes from Lincoln Cathedral, where it has been since the thirteenth century, and this is actually its second “visit” to the United States. It was shown at the New York World’s Fair in 1939, and at that time was the subject of some high-level political negotiations, when an attempt was made to persuade Winston Churchill to allow the document to be made a gift to the United States. One can imagine that the Dean of Lincoln Cathedral might not have been too open to such an idea, although the proposal never became serious enough to be presented to him. After being kept for safekeeping during the war (like the Pelplin copy of the Gutenberg Bible, which the Polish government temporarily placed in Canada for the same reason), the Lincoln Cathedral copy went back to England in 1946 aboard the Queen Elizabeth. Unfortunately it was later damaged by the Public Record Office conservators in a bungled attempt to repair it. In 2007 David Rubenstein bought at auction in New York a copy of the 1297 issue of the Magna Carta, for which he paid \$21,320,000. That copy, which had earlier belonged to Ross Perot, is now on permanent loan to the Library of Congress.

As part of the Huntington Library’s acquisition by gift of the Dibner collection of scientific and technological history, the library agreed to install a permanent exhibition devoted to science. Called “Beautiful Science: Ideas That Changed the World,” and mounted in the new Dibner Hall of the History of Science, the show focuses on four main subjects: astronomy, natural history, medicine, and light. It is an extraordinary exhibition. The space is handsomely designed, and there are several high-tech gizmos to play with if you wish, as well as a reading area where reprints of the books are available for consultation; but it is really the rare books that are the stars. Not just a high-spot exhibition, many of the most famous books in the four subject areas are nevertheless there to see. The astronomy section includes such treasures as the beautiful *Astronomicum Caesareum* (1540), a thirteenth-century manuscript of Ptolomy’s *Almagest*, Edwin Hubble’s copy of Copernicus, and Newton’s own copy of the *Principia*, which subsequently

belonged to Edmund Halley. The section devoted to natural history was equally stunning, with the 1469 Pliny and Maria Sibylla Merian's work on the insects of Surinam among the most impressive books. Here they have also installed a wall of 250 editions of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, from the first of 1859 to recent paperbacks and translations. The medical books ranged from Ketham's *Fasciculus medicinae* (1493 or 1494), the first illustrated medical book, to manuscripts of Louis Pasteur and a lovely copy of Hunter's book on the gravid uterus. The final section, devoted to light, includes a selection from the Dibner light-bulb collection (doubtless an albatross around the neck of a research library, but interesting to see) as well as Newton's own copy of the second edition of his *Opticks*. (His copy of the first edition is at McGill University Library in Montreal.) This is altogether an outstanding exhibition, although its "permanence" will surely give the Huntington conservators high blood pressure.

Erwin Tomash has been collecting books on the history of calculation for many years. Indeed he was among the first to see computer books in the broadest sense as a collecting area, long before they became popular (and expensive). With assistance from Michael R. Williams, a Canadian professor of computing history, he has now published a massive three-volume illustrated catalogue of his collection. *The Erwin Tomash Library on the History of Computing* is available for \$500 (plus shipping) from the author at 3918 Mainsail Place, Soquel, CA 95073. The material ranges from the fifteenth century to 1950 and is carefully described and illustrated, and among the wonderful books included is the famous *Livre de prières tissé* (1886-87) woven on a Jacquard loom from punched cards.

The second biennial Codex International Book Fair and Symposium was held in Berkeley on February 9-11. Over 140 book artists, printers, and dealers had tables in the second floor Pauley Ballroom at the University of California during the three afternoons when the fair was open to the public. During the mornings, 200 people filled the auditorium of the Berkeley Art Museum to hear talks from practitioners and critics. Lawrence Wechsler gave a talk on the continuing value of the book, and was so diverting and charming that you instinctively wanted a bit more logic and a bit more depth. Antoine Coron, curator of the Réserve at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, spoke informatively

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

and at great length about French artists' books. Tate Shaw, Emily McVarish, Clemens-Tobias Lange, and Karen Bleitz spoke about their work to varying degrees of response. Ron King of the Circle Press was the final speaker, with the same talk he had given earlier at Scripps College, and he received a well deserved standing ovation.

There were many wonderful books and book-like things at the Codex Book Fair, which was very well attended. Perhaps it is invidious to single out a few pieces among such plenty, but I was intrigued and impressed by Brian Cohen's two music-related books that combine text and etchings, one based on Schubert's *Die Winterreise* and the other on Schönberg's *Pierre Lunaire*. *A Woman Hit By a Meteor* from the Brighton Press in San Diego is quite stunning and was doubtless the largest book at the fair. (Readers old enough to remember may recall the famous photograph of that woman reclining in her hospital bed with her gown drawn up, exhibiting on her right side a bruise of vast proportions.) Peter Koch and his board are to be congratulated for putting on a very successful event. A book commemorating the inaugural 2007 Codex Fair has recently been published, and is a bargain at \$75. It is called *Book Art Object* and is available either from the Codex Foundation or from Oak Knoll Press.

The 42nd California Antiquarian Book Fair followed Codex on February 13-15, ominously opening on a bad day for the superstitious and unrolling in a bad climate for the global economy. (Bad climate applied to the weather as well, with heavy rain every day during the fair.) At every book fair some dealers do well and some do poorly, and this fair was no different. What was different, perhaps, were the book-sellers' expectations, as many came with a sure conviction that their totals would be lower than usual. Gossip contended that at least one dealer did more than \$300,000, and that another did less than \$5,000, although most of the dealers to whom I spoke seemed modestly happy at doing somewhere in between. One participant described the results as "acceptably meager." There were some terrific books on the floor, including Copernicus' very rare first book (not the famous *De revolutionibus*, but a section of it printed one year earlier), a fine copy of the second edition of Perrault's fairy tale collection (1697), a demonstrably seventeenth-century fore-edge painting on a folio book printed in 1638, an incunable with two woodcuts (out of a total of three) that

seem to have been designed as illustrated wrappers, a beautiful set of Balzac's *Les Cent contes drolatiques* (1832-37) in the original printed wrappers, and two copies of Vesalius' *Fabrica*. A sixteenth-century edition of the Psalms in a dated and signed pigskin binding seemed very reasonable at \$650, and even the editio princeps of Valturius (1472) did not seem overvalued at the same price with three extra zeros. One of the pamphlets that make up *Printing and the Mind of Man* 422 ("The Atom Bomb") seemed quite cheap at \$600, and, if one had the money, a wonderful hand-colored printer's manual from Germany (c. 1673) by Georg Wolffger was a highly desirable book. A Dutch dealer produced a fair catalogue with perhaps the most eye-catching headline of the day over an eighteenth-century book: "California Absolutely Unfit for Habitation." During the worst of the rain over book fair weekend, it seemed an almost unarguable contention.

GIFTS TO THE LIBRARY

On April 13, Mary Laird opened an exhibition of her work "Quelquefois Press: 40 Years of Printing Art & Poetry," promising not to speak more than a minute and a half on any one year. Members may enjoy her creativity until June 22 in general, and in one instance, forever. Laird graciously gave the Club a copy of Anita Barrows's book of poetry *Kindred Flame*, printed in an edition of 101. Barrows's poetry confronts choices "between that which must be preserved and that which must be transformed by some process initiated by destruction."

Laird placed an abstract woodblock, infused with mysticism and Sufism, on each page. She writes, "Over ten years has flashed by since I first asked Anita for poems. I was busy working to finish other books, got side tracked and so on." Thus by delay Laird has produced a perfect "Sometimes" or *quelquefois* book. Thank you, Mary Laird.

The Club is grateful to have received the latest Printing Historical Society book *A Stickful of Nonpareil*, a reprint on one of the Cambridge University Press Christmas books. With humor and joy, it describes the press in the mid-1950s. The introduction by David McKitterick and illustrations by the well known Edward Ardizzone complement George Scurfield's text.

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

The Club has just purchased the *The Parable of the Prodigal Son* by William A. Dwiggins. It is our earliest example of his hand lettering and his arts and crafts book contains all the hallmarks of his superb design sense. It begins our large and long collection of Dwiggins's mastery. This very rare pamphlet is a joy to behold and for the club to own.

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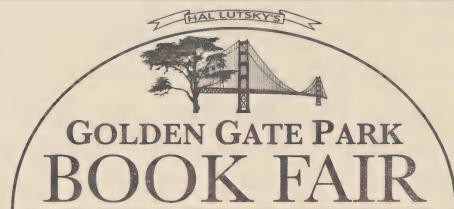
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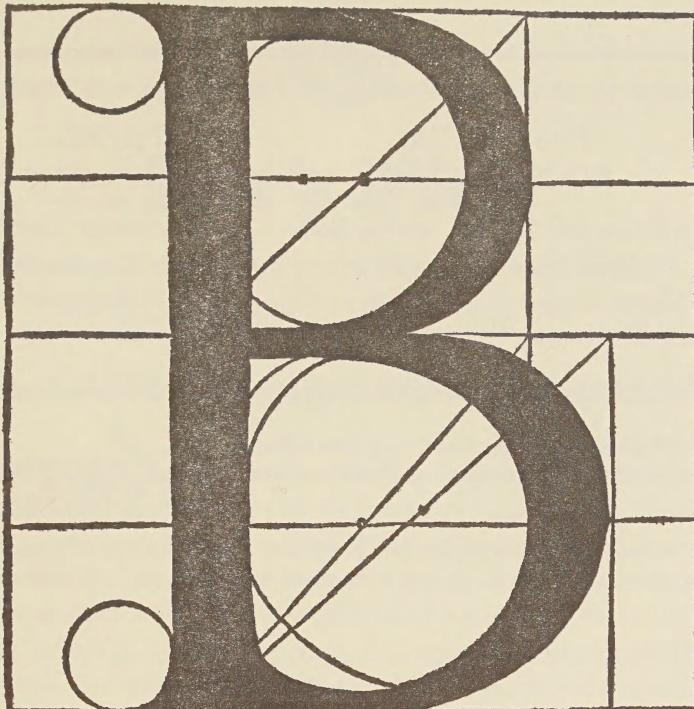
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Let's Play

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA ANNOUNCES
THE PUBLICATION OF AN HISTORIC CHILDREN'S BOOK

LET'S PLAY by THE GEARHART SISTERS

In 1929, Pasadena artists and sisters Frances, May and Edna Gearhart created a children's book illustrated with their original linoleum cuts and verses. It was, however, not published, and the sisters' original set ultimately entered the Cotsen Children's Library at Princeton University. Eighty years later, it is with great pleasure that The Book Club of California announces that it is publishing the first edition of this charming work based on the Princeton portfolio.

Frances Gearhart (1869–1958) became the leading color woodcut artist in California during her lifetime, May Gearhart (1872–1951), a leading practitioner of the color etching, was the Supervisor of Art in the Los Angeles City School system, while Edna Gearhart (1879–1974), who was skilled at drawing, taught art at Los Angeles High School.

Let's Play contains 25 color plates (including one fold-out plate); an extra, loose print is laid in, and there are 11 verses. The Afterword is by Victoria Dailey and A Note on the Gearhart Printing Technique is by Susan Futterman. The edition size is 1000. The price is \$75, plus tax where applicable & shipping.

To order: write, telephone or email The Book Club of California, 312 Sutter St., 5th Floor, San Francisco, ca 94108. Tel. 800-869-7656 or 415-781-7532; info@bccbooks.org



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